

# IN THE DISTRICTS

*A newsletter published by the Raleigh Historic Districts Commission*

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## ■ IN THE NEWS

### Transformation on Blount Street

**B**ehind the scaffolding and plastic tarps, renovation is fast becoming reality at the Heck-Andrews House, oldest of Blount Street's grand mansions. Spearheaded by the state, which owns the property, efforts are now underway to return the house to its c. 1895 appearance.

The story of the building exemplifies the rise, fall, and modern rebirth of the Blount Street area.

In 1869, when construction of the house began, most North Carolinians were still reeling from the devastation of war. Industrialist Jonathan M. Heck, however, had amassed a considerable fortune during the period. He hired architect G. H. S. Appleget to express that prosperity in an exuberant example of the French Second Empire style.

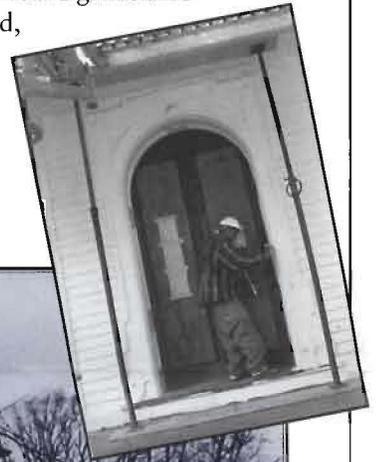
The building's most prominent feature is its four-story front tower, topped by a convex mansard roof in complement to the main roof's concave form. Third-floor dormers, side bay extensions, and elaborate woodwork further embellish the house's exterior.

The Heck family occupied the house until 1921, when it was purchased by attorney A. B. Andrews. By that time, Blount Street had become the

city's most sought-after address.

By mid-century, though, with the explosive growth of the city's suburbs, the appeal of Blount Street was fading. Andrews died in 1946; under subsequent owners, the house slipped into decline.

The building's historical significance did not go unrecognized, however. In 1970, the house was listed on the National Register; in 1972, city council designated it a *(con't. on p.3)*



*Above: The Heck-Andrews House in the early 20th century. Top right: A renovation worker caulks front door trim in preparation for painting.*

## ■ PROFILE

### Mordecai Place Named to National Register

As a result of RHDC-sponsored research, one of Raleigh's most architecturally-diverse early twentieth-century neighborhoods was recently designated the city's thirteenth National Register Historic District.

Mordecai Place developed on lands which once had been plantation holdings. In 1916, the area southwest of the Mordecai House was subdivided; in 1922, eighty-nine acres to the north followed suit.

Not all lots were immediately built upon, however. As a result, the district today displays a broad sampling of house styles popular from 1916 to 1947.

Large brick Georgian Revival and Neo-classical homes were



*Bungalows and cottages share a Mordecai Drive streetscape.*

constructed north of the prestigious Blount Street area and along Wake Forest Road. The more modest houses built to the west range from timbered Tudor Revival homes to simple 1930s cottages.

Designation of the Mordecai Place National Register Historic District is a direct outgrowth of citizen-requested city planning efforts begun in 1994. While the National Register listing does not provide access to RHDC design review services and protection, it does make property owners eligible for tax credits for certified rehabilitation work.

Further details are available from the commission office; phone 832-7238. ■

The neighborhood was built-out over a period of thirty years.

## ■ GUIDE LINES

### Right Fence, Right Place

Traditionally, in Raleigh's historic neighborhoods, careful consideration went into matters of fence construction. In defining this historic character, the historic district *Guidelines* make several distinctions regarding appropriate fence placement and height.

One relates to the difference between decorative and utilitarian design.

Decorative fences more strongly reflect architectural sensibilities. Utilitarian forms primarily enclose space.

A second distinction is that between the "public" and "private" portions of a yard. The "public" area spans from the street to the front facade of the building; the "private" portion consists of everything to the rear.

Traditionally, public areas presented an open appearance to the street; low, open fences help to maintain this feeling. Utilitarian fences were used in backyards. The basic rules of placement, then, are that shorter, decorative fences enclose "public" spaces; taller fences define "private" space.

Corner properties present a special case. There, the side yard facing the street is actually a second "front" yard. The setbacks of adjacent buildings are also considered in reviewing corner lot fence proposals.

Planning a fence? For further guidance, contact the commission staff.

## ■ TECH

### CORNER

**Q.** What's the scoop on epoxies?

**A.** For combating decay, as well as saving time and money, epoxies are hard to beat. If you've priced wood columns or turned balusters lately, you know the value of repair over replacement.

Epoxies yield nearly invisible repairs; they resist insect damage, and stabilize remaining

material. Best of all, repairs can often be accomplished in place without removing the damaged item.

Epoxies consist of two basic components: filler and hardener. Mixed together, they bond and set.

Epoxies can handle a wide range of repairs. Syrupy versions seal surfaces or consolidate rot-damaged wood. Such epoxies are brushed or poured on, then allowed to penetrate and cure. These coatings can also be applied preventatively (e.g., to seal the endgrain of new porch posts).

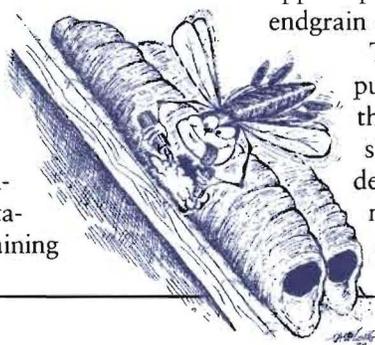
To replace missing material, putty-like epoxy is built up to the right thickness, then shaped and sanded to the desired contour. Staples or nail heads can serve as anchors; granular agents

supply extra bulk to the mix.

Structural repairs often demand more substantial filler materials (dowels, fiberglass rods, wood blocks, etc.), with the epoxy acting as an adhesive. While such applications can repair items under tension (such as beams and rafters), they are best suited to items under compression (posts).

Epoxies can be purchased pre-formulated for numerous specific tasks. The RHDC files and library contain specifications on several product lines.

Retaining original materials is a primary goal of historic preservation. Epoxies help make it happen. ■



## ■ WITHIN THE COMMISSION

### Who's New on the Commission

This summer, the commission welcomed three new members to its ranks. The three were appointed by City Council to fill vacancies created when previous members elected to rotate out.

For Terry Harper, appointment means a return to service; she was a member of the RHDC from 1988 to 1994. An Archaeological Supervisor for the State of North Carolina, over the past several years she maintained contact with the commission by providing archaeological assessments of local properties nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. She serves as an alternate for the commission's COA Committee.

Jeff Trussler is a registered architect, with design credits ranging from private residences to the Pullen Park Aquatic Center. His earliest preservation work came as a student, working with the Roanoke, Va., planning department. As a member of the RHDC, he serves on the Public Relations/Education Committee.

David Black's research is responsible for the nomination of numerous North Carolina properties to the National Register. A former restoration specialist with the state, he headed his own preservation consulting firm for 13 years. Now an intern architect, he brings his insight into local architectural history to membership in the commission's Research Committee.

Members of the commission are appointed for two year terms, and are eligible for reappointment at the discretion of City Council. Approximately half of the commission is appointed or reappointed each July. Reappointed this year were Janet Wellman and Jimmy Thiem.

(con't. from p.1) Raleigh Historic Property.

Acquisition by the state (1987-1992) opened the door to renovation. A formal conditions assessment was filed in 1990. Design schematics were prepared in 1994; a historical paint color analysis was completed in 1997.

This year, the state set aside \$850,000 for a complete exterior renovation. Contracts were awarded this summer, and RHDC approval given for proposed alterations. Outside work is expected to be completed by May, 1999.

Details of the



Artist's conception of the completed Heck-Andrews House renovation.

interior renovation will be dependent upon the building's future use. Two plans are now under consideration—a hostelry for state guests, or a combination office/conference facility.

Full rehabilitation, including renewal of the grounds, could be completed as early as Spring, 2000.

To passersby, however, the most dramatic change may be when the present protective "cocoon" is removed, and the building's new exterior paint colors are revealed. There then should be little doubt that a new era has dawned for one of Raleigh's architectural gems. ■

## ■ CITY GOVERNMENT

### Three Properties Named City Landmarks

The Raleigh City Council recently approved ordinances designating three properties Raleigh Historic Landmarks.

The Raleigh Electric Company Power House (513-515 W. Jones St.) is a locally-rare example of an early industrial facility. The gabled brick building supplied electricity for lighting and streetcars from 1910 to 1930.

Its sister structure, the CP&L Car Barn (116 N. West St.) was built in 1925 to house trolley cars and buses. Decorative elements of the building exhibit Art Deco influences.

The 1928 Pine State Creamery (414 Glenwood Ave.) features similar architectural styling. The structure symbolizes the city's growth during the early twentieth century as a regional wholesale distribution center.

The recent designations bring the total number of Raleigh Historic Landmarks to 116.

Nomination of the properties was made by the owners, and administered by the Wake County Historic Preservation Commission (WCHPC). The RHDC recommended approval. Because the buildings are located outside the city's historic districts, the WCHPC will be responsible for design review of future exterior changes. ■



(l. to r.) New RHDC members Jeff Trussler, Terry Harper, David Black.

## RHDC Meetings

All meetings at Avery C. Upchurch Gov't. Complex

**RHDC Business meetings:** 2/16; 3/16; 4/20; 5/18; 6/15; 7/20 7:30 AM, Rm. 305

**Certificate of Appropriateness Comm.:** (Application deadline & meeting date) 2/15 for 3/1; 3/19 for 4/5; 4/19 for 5/3; 5/21 for 6/7; 6/21 for 7/6 4:00 PM, Rm. 305

**Public Relations/Education Comm.:** 2/3; 3/3; 4/7; 5/5; 6/2; 7/7 12:00 Noon, Rm. 317

**Research Committee:** 2/3; 3/3; 4/7; 5/5; 6/2; 7/7 12:00 Noon; Rm. 303

## Contacts

RHDC:	919/832-7238
Dan Becker	890-3678
Doug Hill	890-3666
Historic Oakwood:	
Tom Gongaware, President	834-0887
Boylan Heights Association:	
Ann Green, President	828-6888
Downtown Raleigh Alliance:	
Errol Frailey, President	832-1231

## Commission Members

David Maurer (Chair), Janet Wellman (Vice-Chair), Jimmy Thiem (Sec'y./Treas.), David Black, Frank Branan, Allen Burris, Ella Clarke, Daniel Figgins, Holmes Harden, Terry Harper, Bruce Markey, Jeff Trussler.

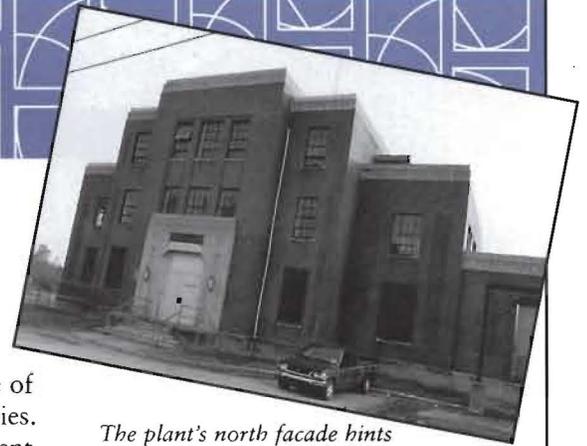
## IN THE WORKS

### Redevelopment In the (Water) Works

The "for sale" sign is up at one of the city's most unique properties.

The E. B. Bain Water Treatment Plant, located on Fayetteville Road just south of downtown, once met the water needs of all Raleigh.

Named for former works superintendent Ernest Battle Bain, the imposing brick building was constructed in 1939-1940, and contains what are perhaps the city's finest Art Deco-influenced interior spaces. Behind its soaring lobby stands a long, arcaded pump room, topped by wide clerestory windows. The complex also includes several accessory structures and acreage fronting Walnut Creek.



The plant's north facade hints at the Art-Deco-influenced interior.

Currently, the facility is being considered for local landmark designation, which would qualify it for an annual 50% property tax deferral. National Register nomination is also a possibility, making available rehabilitation tax credits.

To market the property, the city has joined with Preservation North Carolina's revolving fund. For further details, contact Barbara Wishy with PNC at 832-3652. ■

## A B R O A D E R

### V I E W

We've all seen them; we've often been them. "They" are heritage tourists, traveling map in hand to and through landmark buildings and historic neighborhoods.

In many areas, heritage tourists already make up the largest portion

of the traveling public, staying longer and spending more than any other definable group.

That fact is not being lost on the business community, which has not only come to recognize the economic benefits of heritage tourism, but increasingly acts to promote it. With the growth of the historic preservation movement, heritage tourism has also become

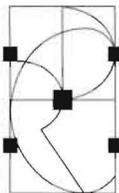
a recruiting tool, attracting new businesses and residents to communities that celebrate their native architecture.

How powerful is the lure of the past? It's no coincidence that so many new houses are taking their design cues directly from their forebears. Today, it seems, we not only enjoy visiting historic properties; we're also taking them home with us.

## COA Tally

Major work (comm. review):	Sept. 98	Oct. 98	Nov. 98	Dec. 98
Approved	.5	1	1	1
Appr. w/cond.	4	3	2	
Denied	.5			
Deferred	2	2	1	1
Withdrawn		1		
Minor work (staff apprvd.):	16	14	9	11

Staff support for the RHDC is provided by the City of Raleigh Planning Department.



## RALEIGH HISTORIC DISTRICTS COMMISSION

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The mission of the RHDC is to serve as City Council's official historic preservation advisory body to identify, preserve, protect and educate the public about Raleigh's historic resources.